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DISCOVERIES

Relating to the CURE of

CANCERS.

WHEREIN

The Painful Methods of Cutting them off, and Consuming them by Causticks are Rejected, and that of Dissolving the Cancerous Substance is recommended, with various Instances of the Author's Success in such Practice, on PERSONS reputed Incurable;

I N A

Letter to a Friend

To which is added,

A SOLUTION of some CURIOUS PROBLEMS, concerning the same Disease.

By WILLIAM BECKETT Surgeon.

The Second Edition, with Additions.

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New DISCOVERIES, &c.

S I R,

I LOOK upon it to be peculiar Happiness to live in an Age, when Men of our Profession consider, that as the Art is capable of receiving daily Improvements, useful Discoveries, confirm'd by Experiments, ought to receive the joint Concurrence of their Well-Wishes; notwithstanding, they may contradict an Opinion that has been almost universally receiv'd. These, we shall always find, are the Gentlemen that in opposition to those Bigots whose Tempers discover them to be the Votaries of a few opinionative Men, endeavour to guide their Judgments by Reason, back'd with judicious Observations, and what ever Arguments are produc'd, will never go about to controul Matter of Fact. It's a Grand Truth that Necessity gave being, to *Physick* and *Surgery*, and Experience is the only Way to

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bring 'em to Perfection ; but it's much to be lamented by them that are Well-Wishers to those Arts, that the Persons which are perhaps capable of advancing them most, devote themselves so much to speculative Fictions (the Effects of teeming Brains) that some have pretended with a magisterial Air to dictate, even to experience it self. In such a Case it wou'd be needless to go about to offer Arguments sufficient to disengage their Inclinations, time only must discover to 'em their Error, when it makes 'em sensible they have, to no Purpose, persisted in the Pursute of frivolous Niceties ; for in reallity, the Benefit of Mankind in general is deduc'd from practical Truths. The Thoughts of this are sufficient to inspire every generous Soul with an Ardent Desire of discovering something that may be of so universal an Advantage : As for my own Part, I was not animated to concern my self in the Undertaking I have engag'd in, by a Prospect of gaining that Honour that is often liberally bestow'd on those that mint new *Hypotheses*, or make new Discoveries ; my only Design was to inform my self, whether some of those Diseases, which are generally reputed incurable, are not actually in themselves curable, and by this means to wipe off a Reproach which has been cast on Nature, when in reallity it proceeds only from our

own Weakness, and the Infirmary of our Art. A diligent Application to those Distempers which baffle us most, has been frequently recommended by very reputable Authors, and some of those who have obliged us with the Histories of *Diseased Persons*, have very often mention'd considerable Cures, which have been happily perform'd after the Patients have been look'd upon by some as incurable. *Hippocrates* tells us, *Lib. 2 Aph. 52. Si Medico secundum rectam Rationem Facienti, Curatio non statim succedat, non est tamen mutanda Methodus, quamdiu id restat quod a Principio visum est.* I am fully perswaded that most Practitioners in *Surgery* have at some Time or other, by an industrious Application, been successfull where Art could not warrant a Cure. As to the *Disease*, I propose to make the chief Subject of this Letter, tho' it be generally branded with the Character of Incurable, I must freely own I never cou'd discover any thing essential to it in general that shou'd make it so; it's true, there are many *Diseases* that are not to be cured, where certain Circumstances are conjoyn'd, which very much contribute to the Misfortune; tho' Others of the same Class exempt from those Adhærents may, perhaps be happily enough cured: Thus for Instance. In *Cancers* we have but little Reason to expect a Cure in a Person that's old, if the

the *Cancer* has been of many Years standing, and is firmly fix'd to the Ribs; but if the Patient be not so far advanc'd in Years as to be incapable of receiving the Benefit of Nature by the regular Discharge of the *Menses*, and the *Cancer* be loose; notwithstanding, it be Ulcerated, over-spread with fungous Flesh, discharge a filthy Matter, and smell very offensively; we do upon Experience affirm that such a Patient may be cur'd. We must own we cannot be of the Opinion of the *Paracelsians*, who affirm there is no *Disease* but what is curable in any Patient, for the Reason we have given; nor can we, with the *Galenists*, agree that the *Gout*, *Dead-Palsie*, *Stone*, *Cancer*, &c. are *Diseases* absolutely incurable; because Experience discovers the contrary. We find that Mr. *Boyle* is of the same Opinion, and thinks it were no ill Piece of Service to Mankind, if a severe Collection were made of the Cures of such Persons as have been judg'd irrecoverable by the *Doctors*; that Men might no longer excuse their own Ignorance by the Impotency of Nature, and bare the World in Hand, as if the Art of *Physick*, and their Skill, were of the same Extent. There seems to be one very effectual Way to rescue the medicinal Art from the Aspersions of some bold Persons; and that is that of a certain Number of regular Practitioners in

Physick and *Surgery*, each of them should apply himself to the Study of one particular *Disease* : By this means we should soon find they wou'd be capable of Surmounting those Difficulties that have all along baffled the most Judicious of the general Practicers. How odd, and disagreeable this Opinion may seem to some Men I know not; bnt I assure you *Sir*, I find it of a very ancient Date, for *Herodotus*, a *Greek Historian* informs us that before his Time, the *Physitians* in *Agypt*, used to apply themselves to the Study and Advancement of one *Disease* in particular *Baricellus*, and *Lionardo di Capoa*, observe the same likewise, in Relation to the Practice of *Physick* in that Country. *Baglivi*, in the Scheme he lays down for erecting of Colleges for the Improvement of *Physick*, tells us that every Fellow of his Literate Society must have one *Disease* allotted him for the Task of his whole Life; and which elsewhere he says is not sufficient for the illustrating the Province of one *Disease*; but that we lie under a Necessity of taking in Materials from all Hands. But there is no Man that we know of, has spoke more agreeably of this Matter than *Dr. Harris*, in his *Pharmacologia Anti-Empirica*, he owns that he took more than ordinary Pains in one particular *Disease*, and assures us he verily believes if learned Men, after a

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compleat Acquisition of the universal Method of *Physick*, and a necessary Search into the Nature and Cures of those manifold Infirmities and Diseases, which, with a kind of infinite Variety, do afflict Mankind; would, with their utmost Vigour and Resolution, prosecute the Knowledge of some one *Disease* eminently above others; they wou'd, most certainly, find a particular Providence attending and assisting them in so good and honest a Design. He adds, a few Pages farther, that wherever a Man's Thoughts are intent and fix'd, wherever his Genius does naturally incline, and all his Aims and Application do continually tend, whether it be to pertinent or insignificant Matters; whether it be too useful, or else meerly curious Things; if he has but tollerable Parts, and Education corresponding, he can hardly ever miss; it is hardly possible he should miss; the becoming Eminent, and in great Measure perfect, (I mean perfect (says he) according to the Modulum of humane Capacity) in that one Point. But there is one Thing to be recommended to the Consideration of the Person, who takes upon him the Enquiry into the Nature of one particular *Disease*, which perhaps he might be very liable to err in, if not caution'd against; and that is, that he be not too bold and rash in his Attempts; for as Ga-

len says, *The Physitian's Art is not like that of an Artificer, who may make what Experiments he pleases, to satisfy his Curiosity; because if he spoils the Materials he works on no Body, is endanger'd by the Miscarriage: In Corpore autem humano (adds he) ea tentare quæ non sunt Experientium comprobata Periculo non vacat, cum temerariæ Experientiæ Finis sit totius Animantis internecio* I believe we shall find, that one of the grand Reasons, why Persons, generally speaking. have been so negligent in making any Attempts on Cancers, has been the seeming Discouragement they have all along met with from Authors. The Caution *Hypococrates* has given us in his Thirty eighth *Aphor. Sect. 6.* has scarce been omitted by any one considerable Person that has wrote of this Subject, tho' perhaps the Sentence has often had an Exposition put upon it, contrary to the Author's meaning; but of this, more in its proper Place. I proceed now to give an Idea of Cancers in the Breast from an external Cause; and this I shall do without concerning my self with the Opinion of the Antients; for since we have been so happy as to live in an Age which will be remarkable for the many surprising Discoveries which have been made in *Anatomy*: We should be reckon'd unworthy the Advantages we enjoy, if we did not study to apply them to the Benefit of

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Mankind in general. The more inquisitive and learned Part of the World, are at this time very well assured that the Animal Body is an exquisitely fram'd Machine, and that its Composure is little else than a Compages of branching and winding Canals, which are kept to a moderate Degree of Extention, by Fluids of different Natures; and that the motions of these were first determin'd by the divine Architect: Thus in a natural State, the whole *Fabrick* is govern'd by certain Laws impress'd on the Fluids; and we often find the unhappy Consequences of the Discomposure of a Part, to discover themselves first by an Interruption of the Motion of the animal Juices. Thus in a *Cancer* of the Breast, which proceeds from a Blow or Bruise (as upon strict Enquiry we have found they most commonly do) is it not probable that by such means a Confusion of the true Order of the little Glandulous Grains and their excretory Ducts may happen? and at the same time an extravasated *Lympha* may lodge in such a spongy Texture, which in time becoming viscid, will coalesce with the Glandular Substance, and form a *Maß* considerably compact? Now this being so, it's reasonable to believe that as the Lymphatic Juice continues its Motion till it arrives at the indurated Part, its Passage must

must be embarrass'd there ; upon which ; 'twill soon be qualify'd for a Union with the remaining Part of the glandulous Substance of the Breast ; and so the whole be perfectly changed from what it was before. This, *Hypothesis* is, in a great Measure, grounded on Experiments ; for if we express a Juice from some of the *Cancerous Mass*, and hold some of it in a Spoon over a Fire, there immediately flies off a small Vapour, and the Remainder hardens not unlike the White of an Egg boil'd ; this shows it to have the Properties of the *Lympha* ; For the Chymical *Analysis* of that Liquor assures us 'tis a Composition of a great deal of fixt *Sulphur*, a little *Volatile*, some *Phlegm*, and much *Volatile Alkalie* ; to which some add a little Earth : Now while the *Volatile Alkalie* keeps the *Sulphur* dissolv'd, the *Lympha* remains in a State of Fluidity ; but when, by making the same Experiment, the *Volatile Alkalie* is evaporated, the Remainder hardens, and forms a pretty compact, whitish Substance. From hence the judicious *SURGEON* may easily deduce the Reason why these Sort of Tumors can never be brought to Suppuration. We shan't be so particular as to mention those *Cancers* which proceed from internal Causes, nor several other things which relate to the former ; for what We have here said, we look upon to be

commonly the Method of the Formation of 'em ; and as such, we did endeavour to calculate Remedies that should peculiarly operate on the *Mass*, so as to dis-unite the firm Cohæsion of its Parts, and dispose 'em to separate and come away, without any great Inconvenience to the Patient ; which is what we wou'd *recommend* with all the Earnestness imaginable to those that are desirous of discovering a Method of Curing *Cancers*. We were before sensible that it was possible for one Body to operate on another determinate Body, without being able to have any such Effect on innumerable Others ; as *Quicksilver* will dissolve Gold, *Aqua-fortis* Iron, *Vinegar* the Shell of an Egg, *Oyl* common Sulphur, &c. which won't have any such Effect on several other Bodies ; for there's nothing more certain, than that the Operations of Diolvents are so determin'd by the various Textures of the Bodies on which they are employ'd, that a Liquor that is capable to Corrode a more hard and solid Body, may be unable to disunite the Parts of one more soft and thin, if of a Texture indispos'd to admit the small Parts of the *Menstruum*. It may be expected I should say something in relation to that which is generally look'd upon to the grand Cause of the Incurableness of *Cancers*, I mean the acid Humour in the Blood. But if those Gentlemen who are fond of enter-

entertaining this Opinion, do but consider that *Cancers* are often form'd in a perfect State of Health; and that during the Time the Cancerous Substance dissolves, and comes away according to our Method, the Sides will run a digested Matter, and heal by the Application of dry Lint only; they will be of my Opinion, that neither the *Atrabile* of the Ancients, the Corrosive *Alkalious* Salt of the *Chymists*, nor the predominant *Acid* of the Rest of the Moderns, are capable of procuring those Alterations that *Cancers* are sometimes attended with. If we trace the Writings of our Predecessors to their earliest Date, we shall find that many of them have made Mention of the Roots of the *Cancer*, which they took to be the large blew Veins that are often extended on its Surface; and the entire Removal of these they thought to be absolutely necessary, or the Patient cou'd not be cur'd: But I believe there is no Body at this Time that considers the *Mechanism* of the Parts in such a Condition, but will agree they are the necessary Consequents of it, and that their Absence, or Presence is of no Importance; that the *Cancer* is sometimes attended with Adharents, or Appendices, which may very well resemble Roots, we are assured; but these generally lay deep, and not easily discover'd; the most considerable One that ever we saw was very near

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Five Inches long, and of an unequal Bigness, some Part of it did not exceed the Largeness of a Goose's Quill, but some others were near as big as the Top of the Thumb, which resembled so many Knots in it, it divided in the Middle, and continu'd separated about an Inch and a Half, and then re-united, 'twas of a more tender Substance than the Body of the *Cancerous Mass*, but of the same Colour, and was probably the Juice that was last apply'd to the *Cancer*, which assum'd a Form agreeable to the Cavities it lodg'd it self in. Such Adhærents as these are, I am more inclin'd to believe, are the Cause of the unsuccessful Attempts on *Cancers*, than any *Acid* in the Blood ; for I am of opinion there are few Persons unacquainted with Medicines that are capable of correcting its *Acidity*, when it happens ; and had the Cure of *Cancers* depended on that, I am positive they wou'd not at this Time have had such ill Character. We have before, shew'd that *Cancers* have generally their Rise from a Blow or Bruise, and that when the Body is in an healthful Condition, and the Blood and *Lympha* temperate and sweet: Now if there always is an *Acidity* of the Blood when Persons are afflicted with *Cancers*, the *Cancers* must sometimes cause it, and not the *Acid* in the Blood the *Cancers*, as is the Opinion of most of the Moderns. What has been hitherto

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said, is sufficient to prove that if Men will be always so sluggish as to acquiesc in the Dictates and Dogmatical Positions of their Predecessors, and not exert their Faculties in endeavouring to undeceive themselves ; we must no longer expect our Art will receive any Advancements, but as Slaves to their Opinions content our selves with what we know already. Were not *Parisani*, *Riolan* the Son, and *Plempius*, so much in the Intrest of the Ancients, that when our Country-man, the assiduous *Harvey* had discover'd the Circulation of the Blood, they not only opposed his plain Demonstrations, but engag'd in vigorous Disputes against him, tho' at the last they were obliged shamefully to recant their Follies. *Celsus* tells us, *Vix ulla perpetua Præcepta Ars Medicinalis recipit* ; Scarce any of the Precepts of the Medicinal Art are perpetual. And shall we engage then in the List with a few opinionative Men, that ground their Course of Practice on those Methods only, in which they have been brought up, and implicitly assent to the Conjectures of Others. No certainly, this wou'd be to strangle Truth, and extinguish the Vigour of our Wits with precarious Authorities. Consonant to this, *Dr. Paxton*, in his lately Publish'd Treatise tells us, *Thus Men, out of a trifling Distrust of their own Parts, will not use*

use them ; or out of Laziness of Temper, will not employ them, chusing rather to be wise or learn'd, by being adorn'd with Others Whimsies, than undergo any Labour, Fatigue, or Trouble, of being really so. I believe there are some Men that would rather contradict their Senses than deny the Authority of a darling Opinion: Of this, we have a sufficient Proof in an Instance, related by an Italian Author, before-mention'd. He tells us, *That a certain Publick Reader long Time versed and grown Old in the Books of Aristotle being one Day present at a Dissection, and clearly seeing that the Vena Cava takes its Rise from the Liver, confess'd with Astonishment what his Senses discover'd to him, but that he ought not therefore, by crediting his Senses, to contradict his Master, who constantly affirms all the Veins in Man's Body to have their Original from the Heart ; because said he, it is much more easy for our Senses to be sometimes deceiv'd, than the Great and Sovereign Aristotle.* I here seriously confess, I have as much Veneration for Antiquity as any Person whatsoever ; but it would be ridiculous, if, as One says, we shou'd so far forego our own Judgments, as always to follow the Foot-steps of Others, and to be certain of nothing our selves: For this wou'd be to see with others Eyes, to hear with others Ears, and to understand with other Men's Intellects ; so that whenever we make Quo-

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tations from the Ancients to strengthen our Opinions, we ought to do it judiciously, and fully consider, whether their Notions of Things, are consonant to the Experience of these Times. To prove to you, Sir, that I have not proceeded to apply my self to the Cure of so formidable a Disease, without a Precedent, I shall instance to you that *Fuschius*, a learned *Italian Surgeon*, had such a wonderful Reputatation for it formerly, that some Authors say he was distinguish'd by a particular Title, which discover'd his Success. His Method I have made use of, and tho' by passing thro' several Hands (the Author being mention'd by Few) it has been stamp'd with wonderful Encomiums, I have not hitherto, found it deserves it, notwithstanding, I did not omit the most minute Circumstance in preparing the Medicine, or prosecuting the Directions; but in its proper Place, I shall take particular Notice of this, and several other Remedies, that have been recommended by some Authors, as substantial and extreamly useful; for if in One or Two Instances they have been crown'd with Success, by Degrees they are handed down as infallible in all Diseases of the like Form. To the former Account I may add, that Monsieur *Alliot*, *Physician* to the Duke of *Lorrain*, has apply'd himself to the Cure of this Disease

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very successfully, as a *Schedule* he Publish'd at *Paris* some Years ago informs us ; we are likewise assured by Mr. *Boyle*, that Dr. *Haberfeld*, one of the Principal *Physicians* of *Bohemia*, has had extraordinary Success in the Cure of *Cancers* ; and the *Sieur Gendron*, Doctor of *Physick* in the University of *Montpellier*. has done extreamly well on that Head ; the Latter of these Gentlemen I can't mention, without making an Apology for not Publishing our Annotations on his Enquiries relating to *Cancers*, which was promis'd at the latter End of our *Chirurgical Remarks*, Printed above a Year ago ; but I assure you Sir, I was more inclin'd for some Reasons to offer what is therein contain'd, with several Observations made with the greatest Exactness, and to which, perhaps I may have an Opportunity of making several Additions, in a particular Treatise, so that the whole may conspire to finish a compleat Account of this Disease. I had at first a Design of enlarging considerably on this Subject in this Letter by adding various Things, but considering they might better find a Place in what I just now mention'd, and that you did not desire an exact History of the Disease, I resolv'd to omit them. I shall now proceed to give you some Instances of the Success of our Method, as being what you are most solicitous of, the Cases

I shall relate shall be each of 'em different from the Other, for I know you don't approve of that pompous Method of some Persons, that enumerate abundance of Instances of Cures when perhaps there is no great Difference in the Cases or the Method of treating them.

The most considerable Case that offer'd it self during our first Enquiries into the Nature of *Cancers*, was that of a Woman, who about Four Years before receiv'd a Blow on one of her Breasts, upon which it began to swell, grow painful, and after some time became all over livid, and of so prodigious a Bigness and Weight, that she was obliged to keep it suspended by a Napkin round her Neck: But in regard our Method was not put in Practice till by other applications it was become ulcerated, we shall speak of it as such. The Patient, then at this time complain'd of a very violent Pain, which extended it self to the Back and Shoulder, by the Communication of the Nerves for those of the Breast come from the fifth Pair of the Spine, and from a *Plexus* about the *Clavicles*.) To remedy this, she had taken no small Quantity of *Hypnotic* Medicines, which, without Doubt, destroy the due Texture of the Blood, and so become prejudicial to the Patient, and disadvantageous to the Surgeon.

on that proposes a Cure. But because Persons generally find some Relief by Opiates, as they retard the determin'd Motion of the Blood, straiten the Nerves, and check the tumultuous and disorderly Influx of the Spirits; so, probably, in these Cases, their Use will be continu'd. Besides the acute Pain, the *Cancer* was over-spread with fungous Flesh, its lower Part extreamly hard, knotty, blackish, and its Basis seem'd inclinable to fix; the Matter which was discharged was thin, reddish, and stank abominably. This was the Condition of this poor Woman, when we first apply'd our grand Dissolvent; the Pain she was attended with the first and second Day after was inconsiderable, nor did she complain of more afterwards, then would have been procur'd by the most mild and easy Remedy the Dispensatory affords. In four Days Time we found a very evident Alteration for the Better; for the Consistence of the Matter was changed, and the Surface of the *Cancerous Mass* became somewhat soft, we continu'd the Use of the same Medicine, and in a few Days more some Part of the *Cancer* came away with the dressing. In short, in about Six Week time, the whole Substance was entirely gone, and nothing remain'd to be done but to heal the Ulcer, which was effected in about a Fort'-night. During the Time

she was under Cure we gave her a proper internal Medicine, not calculated to destroy the Acidity of the Blood, but to dispose the whole *Cancerous Mass*, with its Appendices to come away, which might otherwise, as the Seeds of the Disease, cause it to spring again, thus was this Patient, (after so great a Fatigue she had undergone before she came to me) perfectly Cur'd, and has continu'd so to this Time, without any manner of Inconvenience as she lately told me, it being a long time since she has been well.

A Gentlewoman near Fifty Years of Age, by some Accident receiv'd a Blow on her Left Breast, which in a few Days was succeeded by a considerable Tumor, whereupon she apply'd her self to a *Surgeon*, who immediately let her Blood, ordered her to take the *Lap. Hibern* in Posset-Drink, and embrocated the Breast with *Ol. Succini*: By the Use of these Means the Swelling was much abated, a small Hardness only remaining, which didn't exceed a small Wall-Nut in Bigness, in this State, with very little Pain, she continu'd above a Year; but being persuaded to apply an *Emp. de Ran. cum Mer.* to it, it encreased very apparently, was extremely painful, and in Seven Months time became as big as a large Egg: After this

this she made use of a Woman who was reputed Famous for these Cases; but by One or Two of her Applications the Tumor became as big again as before: In short, it continu'd to encrease gradually from that time, till the whole Breast which was of a monstrous Bigness, and which was judged not to weigh less than Eight Pound, in time became entirely *Cancerous*. It was at this time that I saw it, the Skin was very Livid, looking sleek and shining, and seem'd ready to open, as being scarce capable of longer containing such a prodigious hard *Mass* as laid conceal'd under it, and was in all Probability as big as the Breasts of the *Ammonian* Women, of which *Juvenal* thus speaks. *In Meroe, crasso majorem Infante Mamillam.* She had been with various experienc'd and reputable *Surgeons* before, among which was One not long ago diseased, who was justly look'd upon as an Ornament of his Profession; but not One would willingly attempt a real Cure by cutting it off, or any other Way: They only prescrib'd some palliating Remedies to remove the Pain and prevent its Breaking. I was animated by my former Successes, and prevail'd with my self to undertake it, not thinking I was at all blameable if my Success in so extraordinary an Affair contradicted the Prognosticks of so many worthy Gentlemen; and tho' it

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did, I shall at all times think my self obliged to pay a Defference to 'em. I began the Cure by removing the Integuments from the upper Part of the Cancerous Substance, but did not wait for a Separation of the Slough the Escarotick made for fear of being incommoded in my Proceedure by a Fungus; For this Reason I mix'd some of our Dissolvent with a digestive Ointment, by which Means I had a Part of the *Cancerous Mass* came away with it, without any Trouble to my Patient. I continu'd this Method of Dressing several Days longer with very little Alteration; but upon a Complaint of a Pain between the Shoulders, I was obliged to change my Medicine, and foment the *Cancer* with an infusion of some of those Herbs that contain many *Volatile* attenuating and active Particles. And here I can't but remark, by the by, that Applications to the pained Part would have been of no Effect, as I have many times observed, and particularly in a Woman which had a Cancerated Breast, that was violently afflicted with a Pain in her Arm on the same Side, which would not be removed by any of the Applications the Person that had the Care of her made use of the affected Arm. To this I might subjoyn a very pertinent Case from *Galen*; but I fear I shall digress too far. The Pain
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of my Patient's Back being removed, I proceeded to apply the Dissolvent, which so soft'ned the Superficies of the *Cancerous Mass*, that in Three or Four Days Time I cou'd take off above a Quarter of a Pound of it with the Edge or Back of my Incision Knife, and my Patient not so much as feel me, this I continu'd to accustom my self to, because 'twould have been more tedious to have waited for the coming away of the *Cancerous Mass* of it self. Sometimes I varied my Applications as I saw Occasion, but as my Patient confess'd, I scarce put her to any more Pain during the Time her Breast was dissolving (abating for the Pain of her Back) than there is in the dressing of an Issue. The prodigious Bigness of the *Cancerous Mass* made the Cure the more tedious; for 'twas above Three Months before all of it was entirely dissolv'd and gone; but this being at length surprisingly and very happily effected the *Cancerous Ulcer* (the last Part of the *Cancer* that came away left) was incarn'd and cicatrized by an Infusion of vulnerary Herbs, to which was added a small Quantity of Tincture of Myrrh, thus was this Cure entirely compleated and my Success in it confirmed that *French Proverb*, which says, *'Tis better to be condemn'd to Die by the Doctor, than by the Judge.* I did not make use of that internal Medicine I mentioned in the former

former Case, because here I found no pressing Necessity for the Use of it, but some other proper Physick was taken to dispose the Ulcer to heal, as one would have done in any other Case. Upon the whole of this Cure, I cannot say whether I had more Trouble with the *Cancer*, or in endeavouring to oblige my Patient to a strict Observance of some of the Non-Naturals she so often err'd in. There's nothing can create a greater Trouble to the *Surgeon*, than to find Patients negligent of their Healths, by not endeavouring to prevent or regulate Miscarriages, nor taking so much Care of themselves, as they expect the *Surgeon* should take of 'em. The Rules and Directions of *Physicians* and *Surgeons*, given to their Patients, we have Reason to believe were not so often violated formerly; for in some Places they oblig'd themselves very strictly to the Observance of 'em, and some Historians give us an Account that *Selucus* made a Law, that if any of the *Epizephyrian Locrians* drank Wine, contrary to the *Physician's* Direction, tho' they escaped the ill Consequents that might have attended it, Death was their Punishment, because they did contrary to what was prescribed them.

A Woman about Thirty Years of Age had been for a considerable Time afflicted with a hard painful Tumor under her Tongue, for the Cure of which she had apply'd her self to various Persons, but without Success. When I saw her, I found the swelling to be hard, painful, of a livid Appearance, and incommoded her so much in speaking, that she could not pronounce her Words articulately. I was of the Opinion of some Gentlemen that had seen it before me, *viz.* That it was undoubtedly *Cancerous*, and as such I proceeded to the Cure of it; but I met with more Difficulties in this Case than I at first expected, for after I thought the *Cancerous Substance* had been entirely dissolv'd, and I had reduced the Ulcer to a very narrow Compass, it began to swell again, and in a short Time enlarged it self to almost the Bigness it was at first: This put me upon a Necessity of making an Incision into the Body of the Tumor, that I might commodiously come at the remaining Part, and so dispose some little Dossels of Lint, arm'd with our Dissolvent, that they might have their desir'd Effect, and this in every Respect answer'd what we propos'd; so that we proceeded immediately to incarn the Ulcer, which we did by a Lotion prepared of an Infusion of some vulnerary Herbs, and *Mel Rosar.* Thus was this Woman perfectly Cured,

Cured, and has continu'd well about a Year.

Because I have always found greater Difficulty in treating *Cancers* of the Mouth and Lips than those of the Breast, I'll here relate an Instance of One upon the lower Lip that prov'd extreamly troublesome. It sometimes happens that One, or more, of those Glands which are spread on the Inside of the Cheeks and Lips, called *Buccales* and *Labiales*, receive some Damage by a Bite or Blow; upon which they generally tumefy very much, become painful, and in Process of Time (if proper Means are not made use of) may become *Cancerous*. Such was the Case of a Woman about Thirty Years of Age, who having had a Blow on her lower Lip, neglected it till it was considerably tumefied, grew very painful, and became extreamly troublesome to her. The Circumference of the Swelling when I saw it, which was many Months after the Blow was receiv'd, was very much inflamed, and a small Quantity of *Iconous* Matter discharged from several small Pustules, which over-spread it; the Middle, which was the Body of the *Cancer*, was hard of a whiteish Colour, and moveable; its Sides being only connected to the contiguous Parts by some small Filaments that were detach'd

detach'd from it. The same Thing Doctor Gendron has discover'd in an ulcerated *Cancer* on the Forehead of the Servant of a certain *Marquess*, as he observes in his Third Chapter of the Tract we have before mentioned. I began with my Patient by applying cool and temperate Remedies, till the Inflammation was considerably abated; after this I apply'd our Dissolvent, which operated so mildly that my Patient was not sensible of near so much Pain as before she was apprehensive of: In short, the Body of the *Cancer* was removed, and a good digested Matter discharged from the Sore. Now all the Difficulty was after what Manner we should proceed to dispose the little *Cancerous* Branches in the Skin to come away, but this we effected after the following Manner; the Consistence of the Medicine we before apply'd, was such as was no way qualified for rooting out the the *Cancerous* Filaments, whereupon we were obliged to procure its Dissolution in a proper Menstruum, tho' it required a considerable Time to do it; by this means, we soon found, that what before was ineffectual was now capable of effecting what we desired. This being done, the Ulcer was incarnated by a *Sarcotick* Infusion (for I never use Ointments in these Cases) and cicatrized by the common drying Plasters. It's to be observed,

ved, that the Scar still continues hollow (it having been heal'd near Two Years) and not like those that are the Consequents of well order'd simple Ulcers.

The following Observation contains an Account of One that was cured of an incipient *Cancer* in her Breast, by Internals. I was the rather inclin'd to set down the whole Process of this Cure, because by these, or such like Medicines, Persons under the same Circumstances may perhaps be cured, tho' by some they may be thought incurable. The Case is this ; A Gentlewoman, Thirty Years of Age, of a thin spare Habit of Body, by some Accident receiv'd a Blow upon One of her Breasts, which put her to an immediate Pain, and that very acute ; but it lessen'd upon her being let Blood, and the Application of a discutient Plaster : However, in a few Days, some of the glandulous Grains of the Breast became indurated, and in Process of Time, by their Increase, they were rendred painful. At this Time she sought out for fresh Advice, and continu'd Two Months under the Care of a Person she was recommended to ; but Things not succeeding according to Expectation, she became a Patient to Three or Four more. During this Time the Lump continu'd to
encrease

encrease but slowly, and at the Expiration
 of Six Months it appear'd to be a very hard
 painful Tumor in the Middle of the Breast,
 but no bigger than a Hen-Egg; where-
 upon 'twas thought proper to commence
 her Method of Cure by exhibiting the fol-
 lowing Pills. *R. Pill. Tartar. Quercetan 3fs.*
Calomel gr. 8. F. Pill. N^o. 5. These were
 likewise continu'd twice a Week during the
 whole Cure; after this, was order'd the
 following Infusion, *R. Vin. Rhenan. ℥ii. Mil-
 leped 3ii. Ocul. Canc. 3fs. Croci. 3ii.* This
 was not to be taken alone, but when it
 had stood Four and Twenty Hours, three or
 four Spoons-full of it was to be mix'd with
 a Draught of the ensuing Dietetick-Drink,
 and taken in the Morning, and at Four of
 the Clock in the Afternoon. *R. Rad. Sar-
 saparill. 3ii. Chinæ 3vi. Lig. Sassafr. 3i.*
Corn. Cerui, 3i. Sem. Correand. 3fs. Sant. Rab.
*3ii. Ccq. in aq. Font. Congius 4. per Horæ di-
 midium, deinde stent Clau'e super Cineres Calidos*
*per Horas, xii; postea ebulliant ad tertiae Par-
 tis Consumptionem.* By the Continuance
 of these Means, about two Months, and
 observing a regular Method of living, the
 Cure of this Patient was effected; tho'
 by some she had been look'd upon as incu-
 rable, unless she wou'd submit to the cut-
 ting it out, which is not often attended
 with Success.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, Sir, here you may object, that it is acting difengenuously, and not like a Friend to give you an Account of those Persons only where I have succeeded. To this I answer, that excepting one Woman, that was emaciated almost to the last Degree by the excessive Discharge of a fatid Icorous Matter from her Breast, and an Abscess under her Arm, and who was carried off by a violent Loosness, I never had a Person miscarried under my Care, where I propos'd a Cure. That poor Woman I suffer'd my self to be persuaded to take care of, having but little Prospect of effecting it, yet my Endeavours succeeded so well, that had it been in our Power to put a Stop to her Loosness, I am of opinion she might have been cured.

What has been hitherto said, I do not question but is sufficient to satisfy you, that this formidable *Disease* is not so rebellious, but that it may be sometimes conquer'd by Art; and I might here relate a Case I have at this present Writing, wherein not only a Part of the *Cancer* was fix'd, but there were hard *Cancerous* Knots extended to the Arm-pit; and yet this seems to be almost well; the Ulcer that remains, and which heals daily, not being much broad-

or than a Crown Piece. But in regard the Patient is not entirely cured, I shall reserve this Relation 'till another Opportunity; tho' I will embrace the Present to assure you that I am,

S I R,

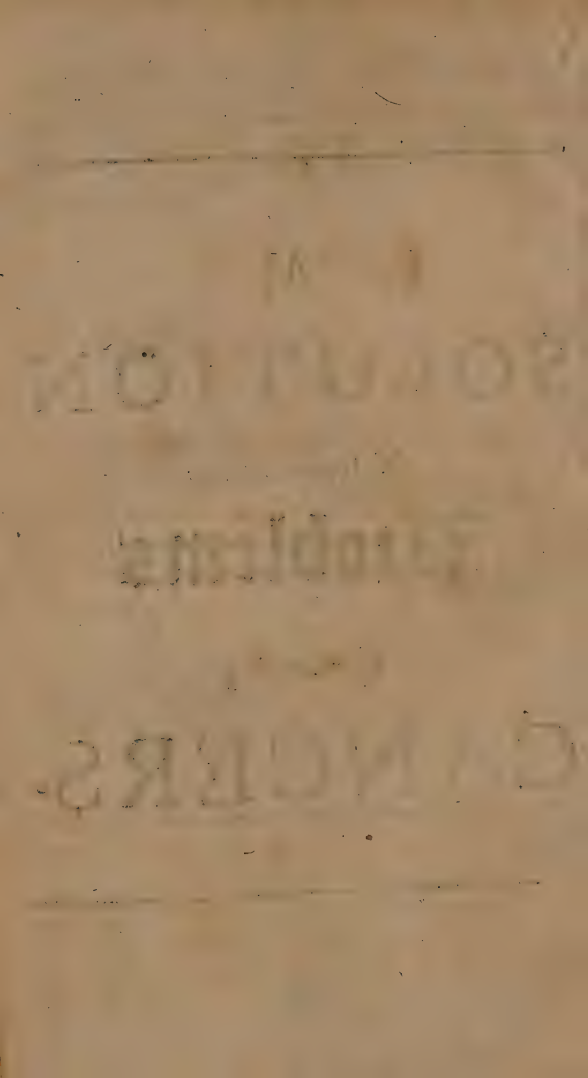
Your very Respectful Brother,

and Humble Servant,

W^m. Beckett.

*Hatton-Garden,
July 12, 1711.*

A
SOLUTION
Of some Curious
Problems
Concerning
CANCERS.



Problem I.

Whether the Cancerous Juice is Corrosive, or not.

WE can't come to a certain Knowledge of the Principles of the Juice which is lodged in the Cancerous Substance, altho' it enjoy'd the very same Properties, of that which is discharged from an ulcerated *Cancer*, from the Account which Authors have given of the Latter; for they have differ'd very much in determining the Nature of the Salts, with which they suppose it abounds. *Helmont*, *Van Horne*, and most of those Gentlemen that were Chimically inclin'd, were of Opinion they belong'd to the Alkaline Family, but a far greater Number than those, have thought they are Acid. *Riolin*, the Father in his Chirurgical Works, without giving his Opinion what the constituent Parts of the purulent Matter are, af-

Vide Ri-
lanus Cap.
13. Sect. 2.

firm'd it to be as strong as Poison, and that no Death could be devised too cruel for such a One as shou'd give it to a Man. This brings to my Remembrance an. very unhappy Accident a Gentleman inform'd me of that befel Mr. *Smith*, one of the *Surgeons* of *St. Thomas's Hospital*, who being so curious as to taste the Juice of a Cancerated Breast presently after it was extirpated, found himself very strangely affected by it, in a very short Time; he washed his Mouth with various Things, but nothing could free him from that penetrating, malignant, and nauseous Savour, he was continually attended with; in short, he became Consumptive, and in a few Months died a Martyr to the Art of *Surgery*. I confess, when I receiv'd this Account it did not a little surprize me, because I had several times had the Curiosity to do the very same Thing; at the *Hospital* where that unfortunate Gentleman made the Experiment. I never found any remarkable Sharpness in it, tho' 'twas always attended with a very unpleasant Savour. I proceeded at first very cautiously in making this Attempt; for I diluted some Drops of the Juice in several Spoons-full of fair Water, till at length, not finding any Inconvenience from it, I came to the Juice it self. We can't imagine the Death of that Gentleman

man before-mention'd, was procur'd by the Action of any corrosive Salts, whether *Acid* or *Alkaline*, which would have caused a Corrosion of the Parts; but that its only accountable from the extraordinary Stench and Malignity of the Matter, which impressing its Virulency on the Animal Juices must undoubtedly disturb their regular Motions, and cause the utmost Confusion of the whole *Æconomy*. It must certainly be a very tragical Scene, to observe how Nature, by so inconsiderable Means, confounds and insults over the Animal System; but still there is nothing we are more certain of, than that her Method of Procedure is always consistent to the Rules she acts by. Since the writing of this, looking over a little Tract which informs us of the Rarities in *New-England*, I met with a Relation which discovers to us the peculiar and odd Quality of the Juice of a Cancerated Breast, or Wolf, as our Author calls it. He tells us that an indulgent Husband, by sucking his Wife's sore Breast to draw out the Poison, lost all his Teeth, but was attended by no other Inconvenience. Now this does not prove that so strange an Effect should succeed the sucking the Ulcer, because of the Corrosiveness of the Matter, for had it been so, such tender Parts as the Gums, Lips, and Tongue, could not have escap'd
 so

so well as to have receiv'd no Damage by it.

Problem II.

*Whether Cancers are contagious,
or not.*

TH E R E has been a very great Disagreement in the Sentiments of our Predecessors as to this Point ; but *Zacutus Lusitanus* proposes to prove it by Reason and Experience, his Reasons are First, because in an ulcerated *Cancer* there's a Cadaverous Stench and Rottenness, which infects the neighbouring Parts, with its Virulency. Secondly, Because a *Cancer* is the same Disease as an *Elephantiasis*, and *Leprosy* of a particular Part. To this, *Senner-tus* in his Posthumous Works answers, that all corrupted and fætid Substances are not contagious ; for in a *Gangrene* and *Sphacellus*, there is the greatest Corruption and offensive Smell, yet we don't find that a Person is kill'd by it : He adds, tho' a *Cancer* has some Similitude to an *Elephantiasis*,

Vid. *Zacut. de
Prax. Med. ad-
mirand. Lib.
i. Obs. 15.*

asis, they are different *Diseases*. *Lusitanus* deduces his Experience from an Observation of a poor Woman, that having an ulcerated *Cancer* in her Breast, and lying with three Children, they were affected after the same Manner by the Contagion. He says that Two of 'em died; but the Third, which was of a stronger Constitution, had the *Cancer* cut off by a *Surgeon* and was cured. *Sennere-*
tus is of Opinion that these Children did not contract the *Disease* by Contagion, but that it was by Hereditary Succession. We likewise find that *Cardan. Lib. de Venen. Cap. 12.* is of Opinion that *Cancers* are not contagious. However, we'll not make any particular Enquiry into these Authors Reasons, when they so strenuously maintain this Point; but only relate a remarkable History, which will prove the contrary, if the *Cancerous* Matter comes to an immediate contract with a soft and glandulous Part. The Relation I had (some time ago) from a Gentleman not long since deceased, who, out of a pious Disposition, had devoted himself for several Years last past, to be serviceable to the greatest Objects of Charity. He inform'd me that a Tradesman's Wife in *Nottingham*, being so unhappy as to labour under a *Cancer* in one of her
Breasts,

*Vid. Sennett.
Paralipom.
ad Part.
1 Cap. 19.*

Breasts, her Husband was of Opinion he cou'd relieve her by sucking it ; accordingly he put this Method in Practice, in hopes without doubt he cou'd effect a Cure, by drawing the *Cancerous* Matter out of the Nipple ; he continu'd his Attempts for some Time, but found it did not answer his Design ; for tho' a small Quantity of Matter was discharged this way, the *Disease* still became worse, and she terminated her Life soon after. Two Months were scarce expir'd before the Husband of the Deceased came up to *London*, upon Account of a swelling he had arose on the Inside of the upper Jaw ; he apply'd himself to some ingenious *Surgeons* for Advice, who assured him he must undergo the drawing of several Teeth on that Side of the Jaw which was affected, and have the Swelling, and Part of the Jaw-Bone (if necessary) cut away ; he went away very much dissatisfy'd with so harsh a Proposal, and became a Patient to a Person, who undertook to cure him with *Gargles*, and such inconsiderable Remedies ; however, by the Use of these Things he was of Opinion he became much better, and thought he should be cur'd. Upon this he retir'd into the Country to his Business, but in less than a Month's Time he was obliged to come up again, and have the former Method

Method put in Practice. But the Event was according to that Expression of Galen, *Quibus item sunt Cancra* Vide Galen, in Aph. Hip. Com. Lib. 6. Aph. 38. *in cavitate Corporis, aut Palato, sede utero, si secentur, aut urantur, Ulcera cicatrice induci non possunt.* For

the Sore could never be brought to Cicatrize, but the Cancer continu'd to spread, till it had extended it self over most of the internal Parts of the Mouth, and to the inner Part of the Nose: In this unhappy Condition, he liv'd some time, but at last became so frightful an Object, and the Stench that continually proceeded from the Parts was so offensive, that he retir'd himself from the World, and finish'd his miserable Life in a Garret. Since the finishing the *Solution* to the foregoing **Problem** I met with a Surgeon (a Foreigner) who giving me an Account of the present State of the Practice of Surgery in the Country where he liv'd, and relating some considerable Cases which had happen'd within his own Knowledge, in answer to my Desire, among other things, told me, without any particular Intimation from me, he knew a very odd Accident, which happen'd upon a Woman's having an ulcerated Cancer in her right Breast, which was, that she being poor, for want of other Conveniencies, suffer'd

two Children she had to lie with her in that Condition ; at length one of 'em, a Girl about five Years old, began to be afflicted with a small painful Tumor in one of her Breasts, which encreasing to near the Bigness of an Egg, became Livid, and entirely *Cancerous* ; the Mother died some time after, and the Child did not long survive her ; but the other Child continu'd well. Several *Surgeons* gave their Sentiments of this Case ; some thought it to be an Hereditary Indisposition, but considering the Mother had no Appearance of a *Cancer* before, or at the Birth of the Child, I cannot but readily embrace the Opinion of those Gentlemen, that were inclin'd to believe that it was contracted by Contagion, seeing the Position of the Child's Body was such in Bed, that that Part of it which was affected was almost always disposed to rub against the Dressings soaked in Matter ; (for I understand the Mother took but very little Care to change them often.) Now it is not at all probable, that the malignant *Effluvia*, which continually pass off from the *Cancerous Mass*, and the putrefied Matter, can dispose a Person at any little Distance to be affected with the like *Disease*, for then the other Child wou'd have become a Sufferer ; but it may happen in some extraordinary Cases, where the

the corrupted Fluid has attain'd an exalted Pitch of Malignity, to communicate some of its more active Particles to the Blood and Spirits ; and so causing a very great Disorder in their Motions produce a violent Fever, and Confusion of the whole Oeconomy, so as to occasion a Person's Death. But see a remarkable Case in *Tulpius, Lib. 4. Obs. 8.* That there are several cutaneous *Diseases* that may be propagated by Contagion, if a Person lies with another, is by all allow'd of ; and that the lying with a Person that has a *Cancer* may be attended by such a *Disease* ; from the Proofs we have brought, I suppose will be agreed to be equally as certain ; but this cannot happen unless the matter be very malignant, and be suffer'd, by the Negligence of the Patient, to come to an immediate Contact, with a Part of the Body of the other Person ; for then, without doubt, it may contuminate the Fluids, and incline 'em to assume a Viscidity, to which the *Effluvia* will immediately adhære, because they are best qualify'd for a Union with those Substances that are viscous. To this we may add, that in those Persons that are nearly related, the Malignity may be more easily communicable because of their Analogy to each other ; for consonant hereto, *Diemerbroeck* says in his *Treatise of*

the Plague, that Kindred more easily receive the Infection from one another. But see
Vide Diemerbroeck de Pest. Page 58. more in that Author's excellent Book where you have likewise some curious Thoughts relating to Contagion.

Problem III.

Whether if the extirpating a Cancerous Breast happens to be successful, it ought to be lock'd upon as a Consequent of Performing the Operation better than our Predecessors.

BY the Account we receive from Authors we can't be positively assured, whether there was any particular established Method in the first Ages of this Art, for the Performance of this Operation: This
 we

we are only assured of, that there are some Circumstances which relate to it, that have been taken Notice of; the most considerable of which is, that the actual Caution was to be apply'd immediately after the Abcision; this they advised, not only to put a Stop to the Flux of Blood, but likewise to correct the ill Quality of it: 'Tis to be observ'd, that they order'd always, upon such an Occasion, Defensatives to be apply'd to the contiguous Parts, to prevent their being inflamed; but for as much as they were sensible the actual Caution would procure an Eschar, they recommended the Use of Digestives to separate it; after which, they propos'd to heal it as a common Ulcer. The very next Advance this Operation receiv'd, that we have met with, was by that Accurate Writer *Franciscus Arcæus*, who obliged the World with an exact and methodical Account of the whole Method of Proceedure in extirpating a Cancer in the Breast; tho' this Author wou'd only venture on those that were not ulcerated, those that were he look'd upon as incurable, we don't find that this Method was recommended to the World by any remarkable Histories of Cures effected by it;

*Vide Aëtius
Tetrab. 4. Ser. 4.
Cap. 44.*

*Vid. Arcæus, lib. 2.
Cap. 3 de Curand.
Vulnerib.*

it ; whether it proceeded from the Unsuccessfulness of the Attempts, or its Disuse, we can't determine. *Fabritius Hildanus* likewise made a considerable Step toward the Encourageing the Performing this Operation ; and he assures us, he has more than once done it with Success ; he did not only influence his Contemporaries to revive an Operation, that was, perhaps, almost grown out of Date, by the Histories of some Cases he recites ; but obliged them with the Figure of a Pair of Forceps, which in this Operation are very convenient to engage the Breast, and thereby prevent the Pain the Patients are sometimes put to, by piercing the Breast with Needles arm'd with Silk to suspend it. There are several Ways of performing the Operation, mention'd by latter Practitioners, but at this Time there are few that are willing to be concern'd in it. A very considerable Author speaking of extirpating a *Cancerous Breast*, advises us to take care we don't cut the Pectoral Muscle in the Operation : But we have seen a very remarkable Case of this Nature, where a Part of that Muscle was cut away, and the Cartilages of Two of the Ribs laid bare, and the Patient happen'd to be cur'd. Now if our Predecessors had so great a Respect to the avoiding the wounding of this Part, as to make
their

their Incisions too superficial, their Operations must be in all Probability unsuccessful; for we are very well assured by Experience, that their actual Cauteries will have no good Effect here, nor will they consume the remaining Part of the *Cancerous Mass*. We have elsewhere shew'd, that this Substance upon boiling becomes hard and friable; and we will here take the Liberty to give our Opinion of the Use of Cauteries in this Case. The *Cancerous Substance* we take to be nothing more than a Transformation of the small glandulous Bodies, which form the Breast, and a Lymphatick Juice, intimately incorporated therewith, into a hard, close, whiteish, and (by common Medicines) indissolvable *Mass*. In some Cases, perhaps, it may receive some Addition from some Juices, which may distill from the contiguous Fibres. This being granted, what Benefit, can we reasonably imagine, will ensue on this painful Method? Will not the Fire, by causing the more Fluid Parts of the *Mass* to evaporate, actually dry up, torrefy, and harden it; and so dispose it for displaying a Train of mischievous Effects, on the contiguous Parts? and all this without any very apparent Decrease of it too: Nay, the very reducing of it to such a Consistence, which very much resembles a
 Piece

Piece of burnt Horn, is sufficient to procure a perpetual Pain, seeing Medicines can hardly soften it, so as to reduce it to its first State.

Problem IV.

Whether a Salivation will Cure a Cancer.

THE extraordinary Success this Method has been attended with, in some Cases of the greatest Difficulty, has so far recommended it to the World, that it's at this Time become of so great Repute, that there are few Persons but what will willingly embrace it, if proposed to 'em, provided they have found former Methods prove ineffectual. We once knew a Person, who labour'd under an ulcerated *Cancer* in her Breast, advised to it, and who had certainly under-gone it, tho' contrary to the Opinion of some Persons concern'd, if in Three or Four Days Time she had not been reduced to such a weak Condition, that it put an End to the

the Controversy. That a *Salivation* has cur'd the most malignant and spreading *Ulcers*, and those that have been of several Years continuance, notwithstanding their Edges have been high, inverted, and assum'd the Consistence of a callous Body we have found by several Instances; but that it should cure a *Cancerous Ulcer*, an *Ulcer* which is chiefly seated in a transform'd animal Substance, and which has no Correspondence with the contiguous Parts, is what we can't believe. One of the principal Effects of *Mercury*, if prudently given, is, that it attenuates the Juices, clears the Canals, destroys the ill Quality of that Fluid that has a Hand in causing any Obstruction, and renders the Juices temperate and sweet. By effecting this, it is, that it cures so many different Diseases, which perhaps have not so great a Diversity in their Causes, but have different Appearances, which depend upon the Variety of Parts, where the Cause operates. From hence any One may judge, that a Person who discovers a certain Method of curing *Cancers* by Medicines only, will find that it will not consist in a Secret for purifying the Juices, which can have no Effect on the *Cancerous Mass*, so as to procure its Dissolution; and without a Remedy for which his Method will be always unsuccessful. *Merck-*

lin, in his Treatise *de Transfus Sanguinis*, Pag. 35. tells us we have no Reason to believe we may have Success from Transfusion in a *Cancer*, nor indeed would Injections succeed better; tho', perhaps, by this Means, it's possible so to alter the Fluids, that *Ulcers*, not *Cancerous*, may be cur'd in a short Time, as it once happen'd to a certain Person, who being under Cure for an inveterate Pox, had some *Rosin* of *Scammony* infused in the Essence of *Guaiacum*, injected into his Veins, which Vomited him excessively; but his *Ulcers* were heal'd in three Days Time. From what has been hitherto said, it's evident, that a *Salivation* can never cure a confirm'd *Cancer*, because it's not capable of procuring a Dissolution of that hard Substance, which is the real *Cancer* it self. The Glands we have observ'd, with the extravasated *Lympha*, and its Vessels, are perfectly changed to a different Substance to what they were before, all which make a *Mass* of such a Nature, that it will be impossible to procure its Dissolution by any inward Means. If the *Cancer* was nothing more than a Coagulation of the Juices in the Vessels, or other Canals, or Pipes, the Cure might be much more easily effected, but as the *Cancer* is conjoyn'd with such Circumstances as we have mention'd, we may affirm the Cure will

will be altogether impossible without the whole Substance with its Appendices or Branches (which we have found they often have) be taken away; or a perfect Dissolution of all of it be procured by some external Remedy, which is capable of operating on it after such a peculiar Manner, as to dissolve the *Cancerous Substance*, without having any such Effect on the contiguous Parts.

Problem V.

Whether Cancers are Curable by Causticks.

THE Difficulty that those of our Predecessors who had Courage enough to attempt the Cure of *Cancers*, must unavoidably meet with, oblig'd them to enter upon several Methods of Practice, in order to be capable of surmounting it; and there have not been wanting for these several hundred Years last past, some Gentlemen in the Republick of Medicine that have propos'd to Conquer this Rebellious Disease, by the use of some particular Causticks, they have recommended. Its foreign to my Design, to give an Account of the Composition of the several Remedies, they have been big with the Expectation of Success

Success from; I shall only take notice of one or two not very pompous Preparations, that by some Persons I know, have been look'd upon as extraordinary as any that have been transmitted to us. *Guido*, who I think I may justly say is one of the best Authors of so ancient a Date, has been very lavish of his Encomiums, on *Arsnick*, and after him *Fallopins*, *Rodericus a Castro*, *Ossenius*, *Penotus*, *Faber*, *Borellus*, and others, have recommended in it in some particular Preparations. That of *Fuschi*, who is said to have cured abundance of Persons of *Cancers*, in *England*, *Germany*, and *Poland*, having had the most said in its Commendation, requires our more particular Notice; *Hartman* calls it *Pul Benedictus*, which whether it deserves that Title, we'll leave to the Reader to Judge, after we have faithfully recounted the Effects of it. Its Preparation is as follows.

R Arsenici albi ℥i subtilissime pulverisetur per dies 15 de die tertio in tertium affundatur Aq. vitæ, ut cooperiat pulverem, post triduum Aq. vitæ abjiciatur, ac nova affundatur, ac misceantur. Rad Dracunculi Major, mense julio vel Agu. collect et in taleolas scissæ ac in loco ventis perflatili exsiccata ℥ii Fuliginis Camini splendidi ℥iii redigantur omnia in subtilissimum pulverem super lapidem marmoreum, et servetur in Vase bene clauso vitreo. Ante annum vero ad usum non erit ita commodus. This Powder

Powder I apply'd to a *Cancerated* Breast of a Woman, under thirty Years of Age, after having made a Sore by applying one of the milder *Causticks*, the first Night it was made use of, it caus'd a great deal of pain, and the next Day, the Breast appear'd very much tumefied and inflam'd, a small quantity of Gleet, having discharg'd on the Bolster, in short for fifteen Days she was not free from pain, she had a *Fever*, was attended with frequent *Vomitings*, *Faintings*, and several other Disorders. I cou'd afford her but very little Relief by internals, or the most cool and temperate Applications to the Breast, nor was it in my Power to remove the dressing, it adhæred so fast to the Sore. There was a Discharge of a bloody serous Juice for twelve Days in a moderate quantity, after which the Matter thickned, and it began to smell somewhat offensive, at the end of fifteen Days the Dressing drop'd off, and and with it came away about two Ounces of the *cancerous Mass*. The Reader may easily imagine that making so small a Progress in such a time, and that at the Expence of so much Pain, I cou'd easily prevail with my self to desist from the undertaking, for the second Application wou'd have been attended with the same Inconveniencies as the first, which to any Person that entertains such a concern for his

Patients

Patients as he ought to do, must be very fatigueing; in short, after this I made use of that Remedy I have elsewhere mentioned, and which from its Effect we properly enough call a *Dissolvent*, with this by the Blessing of God the *Cancerous Substance* was consumed in about three Weeks, and a perfect Cure compleated in not many Days after, the Patient which I saw lately continuing perfectly well, it being the first Case that ever Providence directed me to the use of the Remedy in.

Hildan. Has an Observation very pertinent to what we have before related, he tells us, that the *Powder* so much celebrated by *Penotus*, and which is much the same with that just now mention'd, being apply'd to a *Cancer*, was succeeded by such ill Symptoms, that it Kill'd the Patient in a few Days. We are inform'd in the communicated Observations of *Riverius*, that a Foreigner extirpated a Cancer, that had began to Ulcerate in the Breast of a Woman of Fifty Years of Age, by the following Application. *℞ Arsenici ℥i Salis Armoniaci ℥ii sublimat crud ℥iiii Aq. Fortis ℥i* These were to be distill'd to Dryness, then an equal Weight of distill'd Vinegar put thereto, which was to be distill'd again, till the remaining matter became of the Consistence of a Paste. The Surgeon bath'd the Cancer with hot Wine, and rub'd it with

with Cloaths for some time to *irritate* it, then he spread some of his Composition on a Bolster six times less than the *Tumor*, and apply'd it; in twenty four Hours time, it made a *Escar* as large as the Swelling, so that it wholly consum'd the *Cancer*, after the Separation of the *Escar* he incarn'd the *Ulcer* and cicatrized it. Its very observable, that he didn't engage in this painful Process, without immediately causing a Fever, which was attended with a *Vomiting*, *Loosness*, and much Provocation of *Urine*, which Symptoms lasted two or three Days, for Nature was disorder'd by the destructive Quality of a venemous Remedy. *Paracelsus*, *Faber*, and some others, make mention of Arsenical Preparations, that procure but little Pain in their Operation; I had a Design of making a Trial of some of these Remedies, had I not in my Enquiries met with what was very satisfactory to me, tho' after knowing what I have related, I shou'd have always cautiously avoided the use of any Remedy, in which the *Arsnick* had not undergone such a Preparation as I shou'd have approv'd of, because I am assur'd it may procure very mischevious Symptoms, tho' in Substance, it do not so much as touch the Skin, witness the *Amulets*, in which it has been the chief Ingredient, and of which there have been
such

such direful Accidents related by *Crato*, *Massaria*, and *Zacutus Lucitanus*. I don't think it impossible, but that *Arsnick* may be prepared after such a manner as may by the addition of some convenient Body, or depriving it of its noxious Particles qualify it for effecting uncommon things in the Cure of this Disease, without causing the Surgeon to repent the use of it. I remember that *Helmont* somewhere says one may easily enough correct several sorts of Poisons, so that they shan't be depriv'd of their Force, when we destroy their Virulency. Many Instances of this Nature we meet with in *Mr. Boyle*, and some others; but that which makes most for my present purpose, is, what is mention'd by the last Honourable Gentleman, of a very ingenious Man he knew, that was famous, as well for his Writings, as for a Remedy to cure *ulcerated Cancers* in Womens Breasts, without any considerable Pain, he assured our Author that his Medicine was indolent, and mortified the ulcerated Parts as far as they were corrupted, without disordring the Party, and this Remedy it seems partly by the Confession of the Gentleman, was reasonably enough suppos'd to be a Dulcification of *Arsnick*; one wou'd think that the mention of this very Remedy, with *Monfieur Alliot*, and that recommended in the preceeding

preceeding Letter, shou'd be sufficient to influence the inquisitive of our Profession to farther Enquiries, which must be certainly an Undertaking, worthy the noblest Spirits. To conclude, we can't say, but there are many Cancers that may be cur'd by Causticks, but the Person that is to undergo it, may very well answer, as a certain Patient. did, who's Thigh was to be cut off, *Non est tanto digna dolore Salus. The Preservation of Life would be too dear bought at the Price of so much Pain.* This puts me in Mind of what is related of *Galienus* the Emperor, who it seems had for a considerable time been very grievously afflicted with a *Sciatica*, a certain Physician undertaking to cure him, perform'd indeed his Promise, but nevertheless made him undergo a thousand painful Experiments; whereupon, the Emperor one Day sent for, and thus said to him, *Take Fabatus two Thousand Sesterces, but withal, be inform'd I give 'em not for curing my Sciatica, but that thou may'st never cure me again.*

Problem VI.

Whether Cancers are Curable by internal Medicines.

TH O' this *Problem* at first View, may seem to be too near Allied to that which proves the Impossibility of curing cancerous Tumors, whether ulcerated or not, by Salivation; yet in regard there are some Persons, that tell us the Disease is superable by some internal Remedies, which operate after a quite different Manner, to those generally given to procure a Salivation, we shall enquire into one of the most considerable of 'em, related by a Person whose Memory we have a very great Value for. And we shall the rather take Notice of this particular Remedy, because we have elsewhere spoke of the Success of it. 'Twere no very difficult Matter for me to mention several internal Medicines, out of our Chirurgical Writers, more especially those that have been Favourers of Chymistry; but I shall purposely decline it, because to speak freely, I suspect that most of the Remedies, tho' much has been said in their Praise, have not been sufficiently examin'd by those that recommended them. To
this

this we may add, that had the Authors of 'em consider'd the vast Difference there is to be observ'd in Cancers, they wou'd not have so suddainly and positively determin'd, that their Medicines were of use in these Cases in general; seeing we must have regard to absolutely different Intentions, in those that are not ulcerated, and those that are, and those that are a hard Tumor, and those that are flat, and likewise when they are conjoin'd with Circumstances, which are often enough to be met with. The Honourable Mr. Boyle in his *usefulness of experimental Philosophy*, tells us, that he was inform'd by credible Persons, of a certain *English* Woman above sixty Years of Age, who had lain long indispos'd with a Cancer in the Breast, in an Hospital in *Zeeland*, and was by Doctor *Harberfeld*, with one single inward Remedy perfectly cured in three Weeks, the Relation was made by a *Doctor of Physick*, who was an Eye Witness of the Cure, and another Person who not only saw the Cure, but knew the Woman before, and out of Charity, carried her to him that heal'd her. Our Author was inform'd, that the *Chimical Liquor* the Doctor constantly made use of, does in the Dose of about a Spoonful or two, work suddainly and nimbly enough by Vomit, but hath very quickly ended

ended its Operation, so that within an Hour, or less, after the Patient has taken it, he is commonly well again, and very hungry. He adds, that having some of the Liquor presented him, he found the Taste to be offensive enough, and not unlike that of *Vitriol*, which by the Taste and emetick Operation, was guess'd to be its principal Ingredient, the Relators assur'd our Author they had been in *England*, as well as elsewhere partly Eye Witnesses, and partly Performers of wonderful Cures by the help of it alone, under God, in the *King's Evil*, insomuch, that an Eminent Gentleman of this Nation, hath been cured by it, when *that Distemper* had brought his Arm to such a pass, that the Surgeons had appointed a time to cut it off. Now, who is there, that upon reading this Account wou'd not think the Doctor a very happy Man, that was Master of so valuable a Secret; but alas! How satisfactory wou'd it be to the World if the hundredth part of the Remedies that have been handed down to us, had a Power of effecting those things that are ascrib'd to 'em, without being attended with any ill Consequences. I assure you, Reader, I have made use of this very Remedy, for since I mention'd it as the Doctor's having great Success from it; I met with the true preparation of

of it, as 'twas communicated to Sir Kenelm Digby by Doctor Havervelt, or Harberfield, for the Cure of Cancers, the Kings Evil, and old Ulcers. It is as follows. By Dantzick Vitriol, calcine it till it be yellow, then grind it with Salt, or Salt Petre, the ordinary proportion with this Sublime Mercury which Sublime once again by it self, then take only the Cristaline part of it; of this take ʒi grind it to a Subtile Powder in a Glass Mortar with a Glass Pestle. Put this into a Glass Bottle, and pour upon it a Quart of Fountain Water, stop the Bottle close, and let it stand thus for some Days, shaking it often, after its well settled pour off the clear, and filtre it, take a Spoonful of this Liquor, which put into a Vial, and put to it two spoonsful of fair Water, shake the Vial well, and let the Patient Drink it in the Morning Fasting: As to the quickness of its Operation, and the making the Patient Hungry, I found it at first to agree with what Mr. Boyle says of it, but upon giving it three or four times, the Patients wou'd afterward complain of a Languidness, which was usher'd in by a Sicknes at the Stomach, after this, they'd be attended with a Heat and Soreness of the Throat, immoderate Thirst, convulsive Motions of the Stomach, &c. Some of which Inconveniencies, wou'd continue
for

for many Hours together. 'Twas upon Account of the Melancholy Reflections of bringing the Patients into such Disorders and their Unwillingness to endure such Fatigues, that I had never Courage enough to proceed in this Method. I cannot but say, upon the Alteration I found in a Patient of mine, from the use of Six Doses of this Medicine, that it may as well as some other such churlish Remedies, cure some flat ulcerated Cancers where there's no Tumor to dissolve, in Persons that are capable of often repeating it, which I think is sufficient to put us upon further Enquiries, that we may be able to accomplish such Undertakings without bringing upon the Patients such a Train of mischievous Accidents.

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